

MORE  
THAN  
JUST  
THE  
ROAD

# More than just the road...

*Picture a bicycle path winding down the back of a Michigan hill, the restored grandeur of a Victorian railroad depot, landscaped roadsides, a trout-rich stream running clear and blue. Hundreds of scenes like these are flourishing in Michigan with the assistance of a special program called the Transportation Enhancement Program.*

*Established by the Michigan Department of Transportation (M·DOT) in 1993 as a result of Congress passing the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the program reflects*

*the desire by many citizens and communities to make transportation funds available for more than just roads. Not that roads aren't vital or important, but simply, that there are other pieces in the transportation recipe that are important too, such as streetscapes and scenic views, beautiful roadsides, rich in color and plant life, cleaner streams, and covered bridges.*

*Enhancements occur when communities work with the state in a partnering effort to accomplish something above and beyond traditional road or highway work.*

*After devoting a century to building one of the finest transportation systems in the land, Michigan has entered a new and exciting era. Communities large and small are working to build upon the opportunities transportation provides. They are forming partnerships with M·DOT and the Federal Highway Administration. And, they're putting new and creative ideas to work to preserve history, expand recreation and support economic progress.*

*Enhancement projects may turn abandoned railroad tracks into highly-used bicycle paths, convert mud-clogged streams back to clear, clean waters, and dowdy downtown streets into pretty, tree-lined settings.*



## What's eligible?

*A variety of activities are eligible for Enhancement Program funding, but they must meet at least one of the following qualifications:*

- ◆ *It must be on or next to a highway, street or road that is eligible for federal aid.*
- ◆ *It must be a historic facility, or a historic site that is significant to transportation but has current transportation use.*
- ◆ *It must provide a service related to transportation*

*Here's a list of some different activities eligible for Enhancement Program funding:*

- ◆ *Building facilities for bicycles and pedestrians*
- ◆ *Acquiring scenic or historic sites*
- ◆ *Sponsoring scenic or historic highway programs*
- ◆ *Preserving historic sites*
- ◆ *Roadside beautification efforts, such as landscaping. These may be urban--such as a streetscape--or rural*
- ◆ *Rehabilitating historic buildings or facilities to serve a transportation need*
- ◆ *Converting abandoned railroad corridors into bicycle and pedestrian paths*
- ◆ *Performing archeological research, such as excavations*
- ◆ *Mitigating water pollution caused by road runoff*
- ◆ *Removing outdoor advertising signs*



## Enhancement projects need sponsors

*Anyone with a bright idea, be it an individual, group or government agency, may get involved in bringing an enhancement project to fruition. There's just one requirement: it must be applied for by a governmental unit which receives fuel tax revenues. These include cities, villages, road commissions, public transit agencies, and the Michigan Department of Transportation. In addition, the Department of Natural Resources can also sponsor rail/bike path projects. Anyone can sponsor a project, but they must apply through an "eligible" applicant.*

## How much money is involved?

*At least 20 percent of a project's cost must be paid for by the project sponsor. The average cost share by sponsors in Michigan projects is 32 percent. That's a very solid average, showing commitment by local groups and communities.*

## The path to projects

*Bright idea*



*Check to see if it fits one or more of the 10 activities (see "What's eligible")*



*Check to see if the proper government agency will apply and you can find 20 percent.*



*If yes to above, proceed*



*Fill out application and submit (deadlines are spring of each year; awards announced in summer)*



## Enhancing Michigan

*Here are some projects in Michigan:*

- ◆ *Sault Ste. Marie's Ashmun Bridge approach: landscaping, pavers and a new sign welcoming visitors to Michigan's northern border with Canada.*
- ◆ *Emmet County, in northwest Michigan: new bike path along scenic M-119 to provide cyclists and pedestrians safer travel to and from Petoskey State Park on the shore of Lake Michigan.*
- ◆ *Albion's historic downtown district: brick pavement replacement, maintaining the historic flavor of the downtown area.*



◆ *Battle Creek: a new entrance to the Leila Arboretum on M-37 beckons visitors to enter one of the region's most beautiful botanical gardens.*

- ◆ *East Lansing, home of Michigan State University, has a new brick-lined, landscaped look on its main thoroughfare, Grand River Avenue. The streetscape, an integral part of the Grand River reconstruction job, was made possible through the Enhancement Program.*



## Midland's Pere-Marquette Rail-Trail

### *Bicycle and walking trail*

*\$685,000 total cost;  
\$420,000 Enhancement funds*

*The 22-mile trail runs from Midland to north of Bradley. Eventually, it will run another four miles to the Village of Coleman. Several parts of the trail were built with the help of Transportation Enhancement funds. Not only does it tie several communities together, but it provides a pleasant, safe linear park for walkers, runners, bicyclists and in-line skaters.*

*It's built on abandoned railroad track, and is part of Michigan's overall Rails-to-Trails program.*

*Midland County Department of Parks and Recreation Director William Gibson said: "We've worked with the county road commission and it's been a good partnership. We've learned more about roads and they learned more about trails."*

*Funding included a local match from Midland County, some from the Midland Foundation, the Department of Natural Resources and the Transportation Enhancement Fund.*

*The trail includes a 5.5-mile stretch of "glasphalt," made from recycled glass retrieved by Midland County citizens. The benches and signs along the section are made from recycled plastic.*

*"The usage has been phenomenal," said Midland Foundation Executive Director Denise Spencer. "In an area equivalent to a couple of blocks there are at least 100 people on a nice day. We've been real excited.*

*"It's been good for business too. Not only does it bring events such as the Michigander Bicycle Tour here, but also bicycle shops, little restaurants, and rollerblading stores. It has caused other development too. The City of Midland is doing some river development at the trail head." They rehabilitated a historic bridge as a part of this project.*



## Village of St. Charles

### *Construction and landscaping on median islands on East Belle Avenue*

*\$52,598 total cost; \$24,000 Enhancement funds*

*With cuts in funding for the Downtown Development Authority, the Village of St. Charles was hard-strapped to boost downtown improvement efforts. The Enhancement Program helped make East Belle Avenue, a main street in downtown St. Charles more attractive.*

*The village put in three islands and planted trees in the sidewalk along both sides of the street.*

*"We have a beatification day where the high school gets out for one day and plants flowers. This year they will plant flowers and take care of the islands," said Village Manager Kris Neumann.*

## Fallasburg Covered Bridge

### *Historic bridge restoration project*

*\$225,000 total cost;*

*\$180,000 Enhancement funds*

*"There are only three historic covered bridges in Michigan," said Wayne Harrall, project engineer with the Kent County Road Commission who oversaw the restoration of the Fallasburg Bridge." The Fallasburg bridge had gone 50 years without major restoration. It was time for it again. The Enhancement funding came at a good time.*

*"We were able to do a more major rehab than if we had used strictly county funds. For example, we were able to replace the metal roof with original wood shingle style. This makes it look a little more original. We were also able to use two-thirds of the original weathered siding and keep its rustic appearance. We replaced the entire floor system."*



## Village of Homer

### *Downtown beautification project*

*\$16,000 total cost; \$10,720 Enhancement funds*

*Homer's hometown hero, Olympian kayak racer Greg Barton, was honored with a beautification project in center of the village. An enhancement project transformed a nondescript traffic circle in the middle of town into pretty little focal spot. Adorned by young crabapple trees, a brick path and a field-stone bench wall, the circle is a warm and attractive focal point.*

## Burr Oak Beautification Project

### *Third Street Enhancement Project*

*\$101,667 total cost; \$61,000 Enhancement funds*

*This small community in southwest Michigan needed a shot in the arm to revitalize its historic downtown section. The Third Street Enhancement project gave the community a strategic starting point for its ambitious redevelopment plan. The project includes a streetscape with trees surrounded by ornamental metal grates and brick pavers. The project also provided handicap accessibility to all storefronts along Third Street. The changes have motivated building owners and residents to improve their building facades. The overall result? New opportunities for business growth, and a more attractive downtown.*





# Muskegon Union Depot

## *Historic building rehabilitation project*

*\$874,210 total cost; \$666,710 Enhancement funds*

*With the help of Enhancement Program funds, a lovely historic railroad depot in downtown Muskegon was saved from the wrecking ball. A project to restore the interior of this Richardsonian Romanesque style brick and variegated limestone structure will be a big boost for area tourism. Built in 1895 by the Pere Marquette Railroad during the height of Muskegon's lumbering era, it was once a gathering place for thousands of travelers who flocked to this Lake Michigan town via rail a century ago. When completed, the building will bring thousands of visitors back. It will serve as a museum, office for the chamber of commerce, a luncheonette area, and a stop for Muskegon Public Transit buses.*

*It is located next to Heritage Landing, which has been redeveloped as a park and activity center.*



*"Basically, we had a beautiful stone building that was a wreck on the inside," said Dave Fisher, primary contact for construction with Muskegon County Public Works. "It's been through several private hands, and the county picked it up recently."*

*Restoration of the depot preserves an excellent example of Romanesque Architecture while maintaining modern-day use as an intermodal terminal," said Ted Bidigare, transit systems manager for the Muskegon Area Transit Systems.*

*"This project is a cooperative effort among federal, state and local participation, providing transportation into the future while preserving the past."*



## Burroughs Street Bridge & Portland Rails-to-Trails Project

### *Historic bridge preservation and rails-to-trails project*

*\$318,025 total cost;  
\$181,275 Enhancement funds*

*A historic metal truss bridge, the Burroughs Road Bridge over the Flat River, took a little trip from its home in Lowell in Kent County, with the help of the Enhancement Program.*

*It found a new home on a bike path in the City of Portland. The path, built with Enhancement and City of Portland funds, runs along the Grand River, much of it on portions of an abandoned railbed. The Burroughs Road Bridge was moved to a section carrying the path over the Looking Glass River.*



## Wexford County

### *Water mitigation project*

*\$199,000 total cost; \$99,500 Enhancement funds*

*One of the first Enhancement Program projects to be completed in Michigan involved reducing road surface runoff in a pristine river in this northwest Michigan county. Working together, the Wexford County Road Commission and a local conservation organization, Northwest Michigan Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. (RC & DC), helped keep the highly valued trout habitat at three locations along the Pine River free of road sediment.*

*Workers installed retention basins, stone check dams and other soil containment devices.*

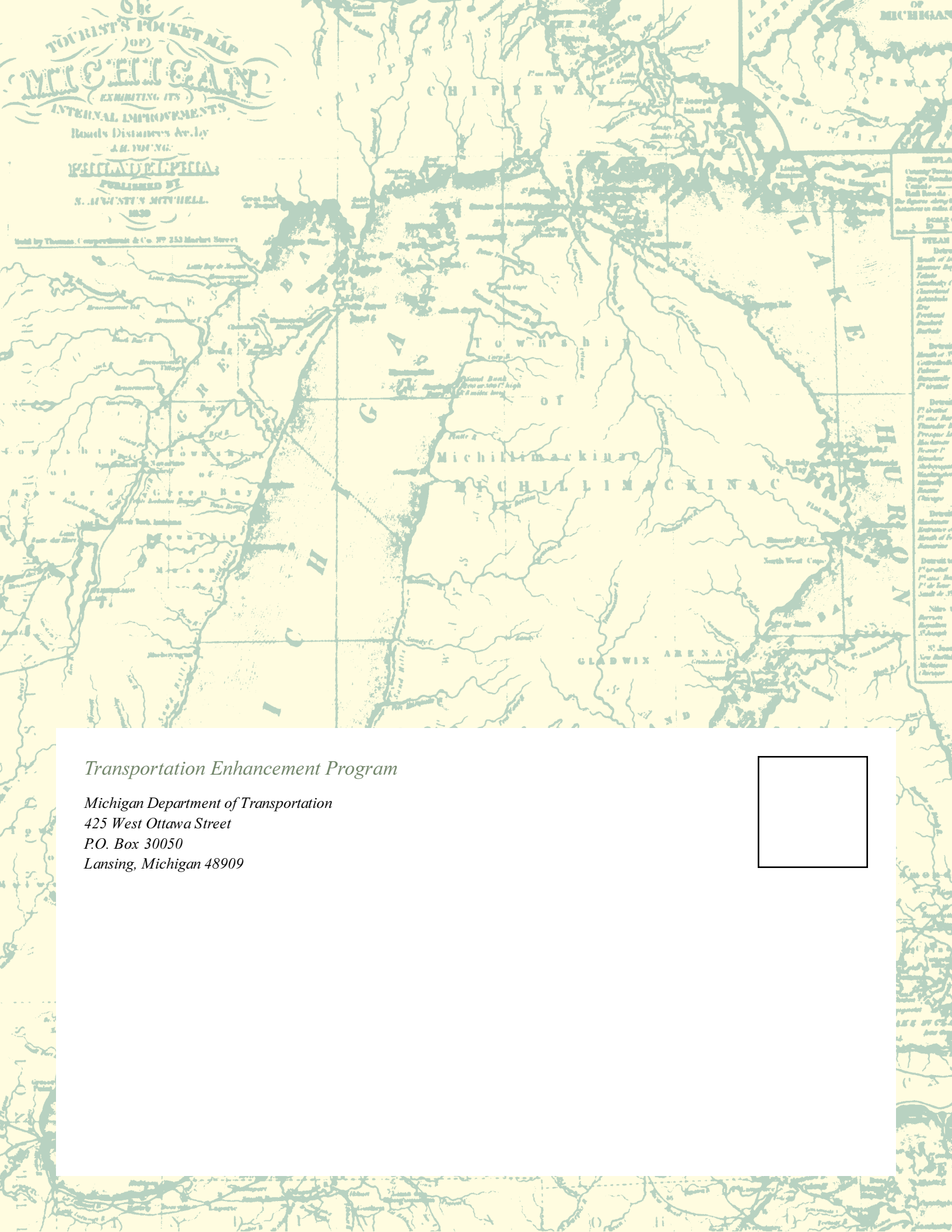
*“These sites are excellent examples of how road commissions can successfully correct water quality problems and transportation issues with non-traditional funding,” said Laura Grantham, a resource specialist with the NMRCDC.*

*Jim Haveman, with RC & DC said: “We’ve been working on road stream crossings for a number of years. Basically, these road stream inventories take a look at road streams based on a sediment delivery basis to show which crossings are contributing the most amount of sediment. Obviously, this hurts fish and animal wildlife quality. We use our inventory to show and explain on a watershed basis why we need monies.*

*“We’re enthused because we know of no one else in the U.S. who is doing this. The bottom line is we’re just interested in the health of these rivers for future generations. “*







*Transportation Enhancement Program*

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